

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 00051 131048Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 /007 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6538

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, OVIP (BOKASSA, JOHN BEDEL), CT

SUBJECT: BOKASSA VISIT

REF: A. STATE 304892 (STADIS) B. STATE 301090 (STADIS) C. BANGUI 1878

1. EMBASSY SHARES DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN THAT THERE BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING BY GOCAR WITH REGARD TO PRIVATE NATURE OF BOKASSA VISIT TO US. EVEN PRIOR TO EMBASSY'S DELIVERY TO BOKASSA ON NOVEMBER 29 OF PRESIDENT FORD'S RESPONSE OF NOVEMBER 20, BOKASSA REFERRING TO HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AT NOVEMBER 24 CELEBRATIONS AT KINSHASA TOLD ALUSUISSE REPS AND RESIDENT AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN ON NOVEMBER 28 THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAD INVITED HIM TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES.

2. EMBASSY HAS THEREFORE TAKEN SEVERAL STEPS TO CORRECT GOCAR'S INTERPRETATION OF FORD LETTER. IN OFFICE MEETING WITH BOKASSA TO DELIVER LETTER ON NOVEMBER 29 AND AT SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS ON DECEMBER 30 AND JANUARY 6 CHARGE EMPHASIZED PRIVATE NATURE OF VISIT. BOKASSA SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THAT AS WITH PROPOSED 1973 VISIT ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE HANDLED BY GOCAR AUTHORITIES, PRINCIPALLY AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATED CHRISTOPHE MAIDOU, WORKING THROUGH CAR'S PRIVATE AMERICAN CONTACTS AND "CONSTITUENCY" SUCH AS DIAMOND DISTRIBUTORS PRESIDENT

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PAGE 02 BANGUI 00051 131048Z

JOLIS, JONES BROS. SEATTLE, ATTORNEY CLIFFORD JONES OF LAS

VEGAS, ASTRONAUT ROOSA, PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE SPORTS COMMITTEE
PRESIDENT LEONARD MILTON ET AL IN ARRANGING AN ITINERARY
AND HOSPITALITY. IT WAS IN THIS REGARD CHARGE UNDERTOOK TO
LOOK INTO POSSIBILITY OF GIVING AMBASSADOR MAIDOU CU PARTIAL
GRANT FOR ORIENTATION TRIP THROUGH STATES PRIOR TO ASSUMING
NEW DUTIES DURING WHICH HE COULD ALSO TOUCH BASE WITH SOME
OF THESE CONTACTS AND SPONSORS OF VISIT.

3. ALSO IN ITS REPLY TO FONMIN'S NOTE OF DECEMBER 19 EMBASSY
INFORMED MINISTRY INTER ALIA AS FOLLOWS: "EMBASSY INVITES
ATTENTION OF MINISTRY TO PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER OF NOVEMBER 20
IN WHICH HE INFORMS HIS EXCELLENCY THAT SHOULD HE BE VISITING
THE UNITED STATES AT SOME FUTURE DATE IT IS HOPED THAT A
MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TIME MIGHT BE ARRANGED TO MEET TOGETHER IN
WASHINGTON DURING COURSE OF SUCH A VISIT. AS MINISTRY'S
NOTE INDICATES THAT PRESIDENT BOKASSA NOW PLANS TRAVEL TO US
IN APRIL, WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH WASHINGTON CONCERNING A TIME
DURING VISIT FOR A MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS.
IN MEANTIME AS CAR GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR PRESIDENT'S VISIT
TAKE SHAPE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING KEPT INFORMED
IN ORDER THAT IT MIGHT ASSIST WASHINGTON OFFICIALS IN
COORDINATING WITH YOU ARRANGEMENTS FOR EVENTUAL MEETING
WITH PRESIDENT FORD."

4. AS DISCUSSED BRIEFLY WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN KINSHASA
DECEMBER 27 IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT BOKASSA MAY BE INTENTIONALLY
READING MORE INTO FORD LETTER THAN TRAFFIC WILL BEAR, FOR HIS
OWN LOCAL POLITICAL PURPOSES. FOR THIS REASON WE DO NOT BELIEVE
THAT BOKASSA WILL BE EASILY DISABUSED OF IDEA THAT HE CAN
PLAY LETTER DOMESTICALLY AS OFFICIAL INVITATION EVEN THOUGH
WE HAVE IMPRESSION HE HAS ALREADY ACCEPTED FACT THAT US
COMMITMENT LIMITED TO EFFORT TO ARRANGE OFFICIAL MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT.

5. EMBASSY WILL PERSIST IN ITS TALKS IN PRIVATE WITH BOKASSA
AND HIS MINISTERS TO STRESS PRIVATE NATURE OF VISIT AND ARRANGE-
MENTS. IN THIS REGARD, WE HOPE TO MAKE THIS DISTINCITION CLEAR
TO CAR AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE MAIDOU AND TO ENLIST HIS SUPPORT
IN GETTING MESSAGE THROUGH TO BOKASSA AT MEETING SCHEDULED
THIS WEEK PRIOR TO MAIDOU'S DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON AS HE
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PAGE 03 BANGUI 00051 131048Z

IS KEY MAN IN ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISIT AND HAS BOKASSA'S
CONFIDENCE AT PRESENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE PROMOTION, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGUI00051
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760011-1165
From: BANGUI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760167/aaaachsd.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 76 STATE 304892
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <25 JUN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BOKASSA VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, OVIP, CT, (BOKASSA, JEAN BEDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006